the production of soyabean in the country during 1998-99, 1999-2000 and 2000-01 was 0.24%, 0.20% and 0.22% respectively.

(b) and (c) In order to protect the interests of the soyabean farmers including those in the State of Andhra Pradesh, the Government announces the Minimum Support Price (MSP), *inter-alia* for Soyabean every year. In case the market price of soyabean falls below the MSP, NAFED acts as the central nodal agency to undertake price support operations by procuring soyabean from the farmers at MSP under the Price Support Scheme (PSS). NAFED procured 12093 and 1435 tonnes of soyabean during 1999-2000 and 2000-01 respectively from the farmers in Andhra Pradesh under PSS. To increase the production of soyabean a centrally sponsored Oilseeds Production Programme (OPP) is being implemented. Under the programme, various incentives are provided to the farmers for increasing the production of soyabean which includes distribution of seeds, minikits, improved farm implements, sprinkler sets, rhizobium culture and Phosphate Solvalising Bacteria (PSB), micro-nutrients etc. In order to disseminate the production technology amongst farmers, frontline demonstrations are organized by the I.C.A.R. Besides, block and integrated pest management demonstrations are organized through State Department of Agriculture.

Remunerative price of cotton

2082. SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether cotton growers in various States, including Gujarat, are not getting remunerative price for their crop and a large number of farmers are reported to have committed suicide;

(b) if so, the number of such cases during the last two years; and

(c) the remedial action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) During the current season (2001-02) prices, in certain centres of some of the States including Gujarat for certain varieties of cotton, have fallen below the Minimum Support Price (MSP). However, no report of suicide has been reported due to cotton farmers not getting remunerative prices.

(c) The following remedial measures have been taken by the Government to stabilize prices of cotton:—

(i) The cotton Corporation of India (CCI), a central nodal agency, has procured kapas equivalent to 7,58,904 bales of 170 kgs. each in various States, the share of Gujarat being 2,08,199 bales as on 8.3.2002 Purchases are still in progress.

(ii) Import duty on raw cotton has been increased from 5% to 10% since 9th January, 2002 to restrain imports.

(iii) Raw cotton has been placed under Open General Licence (OGL) to help Indian farmers to earn higher prices in the international market for their produce.

(iv) The Government has also launched Technology Mission on Cotton with four Mini Missions with total fund allocation of Rs. 593 crores with the objectives of increasing cotton production and productivity.

Transfer of Central Farm at Aralem to Kerala

2083. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Kerala Government has requested to transfer the Central State Farm at Aralem to Kerala;

(b) whether Government have taken a decision in the matter; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) No decision has been taken by the Government in the matter.

MSP for red gram in Karnataka

2084. SHRI H.K. JAVARE GOWDA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the red gram growing farmers in Karnataka are incurring losses, due to market fluctuations, low yield and menace of pest;

(b) if so, whether Government would enhance the Minimum Support Price from Rs. 1320/- to Rs. 2000/-; and